

# Introduction<sup>1</sup>

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Iberia was, throughout the Middle Ages, the European territory with the longest and closest relationship with Judaism and Islam. Despite an irregularly pursued war of conquest and outbreaks of violence in different periods, Christians, Jews and Muslims coexisted for centuries in Spain, in stark contrast with the rest of Europe. For almost eight centuries there existed in the Peninsula an Islamic polity of varying extension and fluctuating borders called Al-Andalus. There, the Islamic model dictated that Jewish and Christian communities, while subject to the monarch, were to be governed by their own law and their own authorities, and in time a parallel model was likewise adopted in Christian Spain with respect to Muslims and Jews. However, this situation came to an end in the late fifteenth century, and in fact had already begun to deteriorate by the late 1300s.

The Christian conquest in 1492 of the last Islamic stronghold, the Naşrid Kingdom of Granada, was immediately followed by a series of laws that forced the conversion or expulsion of Jews and Muslims. Thus, one sole religion was imposed upon the whole of early modern Iberian society. Various waves of persecution and the forced conversion of Jews to Catholicism from 1391 to their expulsion in 1492 were followed between 1502 and 1526 – through a series of decrees promulgated at different times in Castile and Aragon – by the compulsory conversion of Muslims. This constituted the final step in converting the Peninsula's ethno-religiously plural society of the Middle Ages into a new sort of society in which a single religion held sway. In this transformed society, there was to be just one Law, one revealed text, one set of culturally appropriate behaviors, and one accepted form of spirituality.

The integration of religious minorities destabilized traditional categories of religious difference and produced novel forms of social and political identity, while the strategies deployed for the assimilation of the Spanish multi-confessional past transformed the very conditions of early modern scholarly inquiry, in terms of writing both the history of Spain and the history of its languages. The traumatic transition that produced this mono-confessional Spain also saw the emergence of shifting identities and new religious attitudes. These

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included forms of overlapping and redefined religious beliefs which will be elucidated in the various contributions to this book. The converted Jews were often called *Confesos*, *Conversos* or *Judeoconversos*, even generations after their grandparents had converted. Converted Muslims became known as *Moriscos* or *Cristianos nuevos de moro* ('New Christians who were formerly Moors'; these terms will appear frequently throughout the book and are not henceforth put in italics). The transformation of Jews and Muslims into New Christians also meant the transformation of Iberian Catholics into Old Christians. The change was massive and had profound consequences not only for the converted groups but also, as is argued in this book, for the society that had to absorb them. The entire history of early modern Spain is marked by this trauma, which produced long-lasting, multifaceted effects. The most important of these were the founding in 1478 of a new institution for enforcing orthodoxy, the Holy Office of the Inquisition, and the creation of statutes of *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity). The latter legislated that persons of Muslim or Jewish ancestry were to be barred from certain professions that might give them access to positions of privilege and power, enforcing a society that was deeply conformist in its support of a single rigid model, in an aggressively polemical and defensive attitude entrenched in these statutes and in the Inquisition.

Widespread conversion created new forms of otherness but also of familiarity, of intimacy. In short, Christian society had to redefine itself through confrontation with and rejection of what it considered to be the religious and cultural characteristics of the groups from other religions. It included the definition of the whole of Spanish Catholicism since in Spain Christianity itself took on different forms. This redefinition was undertaken with a permanent attitude of polemical confrontation and self-assertion.

The radical, dramatic change that took place as the Middle Ages gave way to the early modern period calls for a series of new questions to be considered. What narrative and scholarly strategies were developed in fields like historiography or Biblical exegesis? How did a new historiography emerge from this struggle to make sense of such a traumatic transition? How did conversion affect religious attitudes towards faith and confession? How does this challenge the way textual or visual evidence should be read and interpreted? How can we appreciate the complicated ties that were established between religious identity and a growing ideology of racial difference? Or better said, how can we perceive the construction of religious identity in racial terms? What practices and identities did the ideology of blood purity promote? And what place do these problems occupy in the larger picture of early modern Europe? This book will raise more questions than the specific essays can answer. The book is divided into three parts: The first, entitled *Biblical Culture, Jewish Antiquities and New Forms of Sacred History*, considers the question of how

integrating new converts from Judaism and Islam stimulated Christian scholars to confront these converts' sacred texts, languages, and practices. In examining the range of reactions to this process, our discussion focuses on the relationship between mass conversion and a distinctive peninsular hermeneutics. We also consider how these hermeneutics are connected to a new quest for Spain's sacred origins, a new 'chosen people'.

The second part of the book, *Iberian Polemics, Readings of the Qur'an and the Rise of European Orientalism*, is closely related to the first. Translations of sacred texts became deeply ideological, as they were used in polemical treatises and in writing sacred history and were closely intertwined with translators' own understanding of the Bible. Persons of Converso origin participated both in translations and in polemics, producing and disseminating translations which privileged those parts of the sacred texts that were convenient for polemics and confutation, in work that was markedly distinct from the translations produced by Conversos and Moriscos for their own clandestine use in worship. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, polemical works, as well as distinctively Iberian translations of the Qur'an and the Hebrew Bible, were put to use in other European countries and in very different religious circumstances. Dissident and radical authors of the pre-Enlightenment used such texts for their own ends, often to support their criticism of all organized religion. Islam in particular was used as a lens through which religious dissidents could radically critique Christianity and the Christian world. The four chapters in this second part explore the ways in which the methodology, arguments and denunciations of multi-confessional polemics produced in early modern Iberia were removed from their original contexts and applied elsewhere in Europe.

The religious pluralism of late medieval Iberia appears here as a highly innovative matrix for the forging of doubt, dissimulation and the erosion of belief. The book turns to this question in the third part, *Conversion and Perplexity*. In the Iberian Peninsula, in the period before the Enlightenment, a polemical multi-religious context inevitably created the opportunity for comparisons between the three monotheistic religions and comparison often engendered skepticism and doubt. The emergence of these forms of skepticism was also favored by the fluctuation of religious identities brought about by forced conversion. For religious authorities, doubt created a nebulous space in which the solid outlines of mainstream religious identity were no longer recognizable. For this reason, it had to be monitored and repressed, its nature – hidden in attitudes classified by the Inquisition as hypocritical, blasphemous or heretical – exposed.

This is therefore a book that deals not so much with conversion itself as with the religious and ideological consequences of mass conversion – and hence

the 'After Conversion' of its title – and most especially with the relationship between origins and faith. It deals also with the consequences of coercion on intellectual debates and on the production of knowledge. A whole set of problems is transversal to the contributions in this book and ties together the three parts into which it has been divided. The main issue is perhaps that of assessing the importance and weight of the 'Converso problem' in early modern Iberian history. To what extent are a wide range of seemingly disparate problems and processes in fact related to the Converso issue? Converts were assumed to have a proclivity to engage in religious subversion; was this indeed the case? To answer these questions we must, in the first place, search for the reasons why such categories arose, became dominant, and were contested.

Even if this book does not deal directly with conversion, there are issues surrounding conversion that certainly must be addressed. For example, we must examine the difficulties in gauging the influence of conversion on religious dissidence, or in establishing the way in which such dissidence came to be categorized as heresy and was identified with converts from Islam and Judaism even when Protestantism was often in the background. Are the categories established by the Inquisition still useful to us as scholars today? We can see from various contributions here that the Inquisition created its own 'heterology' – to use Michel de Certeau's term<sup>2</sup> – to be used when working with heterodox trends attributed to people of Jewish or Muslim descent, interpreting various forms of 'Judaizing' or 'Mohammedanizing' inclinations. The Inquisition was an institution that persecuted and punished heresy, but it also had a pedagogical role, that of defining heresy and telling the population how to identify its symptoms. To what extent did its categorizations of heresy constitute an 'invention' that actually conditioned how such trends arose and spread?

Many people of Converso origin were accused by the Inquisition of in fact remaining Jewish or Muslim. The difficulties of charting the contours of a secret religion (crypto-Islam, crypto-Judaism) are compounded by the sheer impossibility of knowing the inner convictions lying beneath or beyond outward practice. This is of the utmost importance. How did the Inquisition deal with this impossibility? Contributions to this book suggest that by the late sixteenth century, anxiety about the opaqueness of the beliefs of Conversos was the basis and *raison d'être* of the blood purity statutes and even of the Expulsion of the Moriscos. The dissimulation and hypocrisy supposedly inherent to people of Converso origin created a climate of suspicion, which was on the rise throughout the sixteenth century. The idea that people of Converso origin

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2 Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse of the Other* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); see note 93 in Chapter 11 of this volume.

routinely simulated and dissimulated became a virtual obsession. Opacity of interiority was intertwined with the increasing regulation of ritual and culture. The insistence of the Inquisition on the confession of names of other culprits was designed to expose the networks that the Holy Office firmly believed were required to sustain popular challenges to orthodoxy.

Dissimulation and secret religion were also connected to doubt. Doubts about what to believe and about one's ability to know what others believed led individuals to question the nature of the relationship between inherited nature and acquired practices.

Another fundamental problem confronted throughout the book is that of deciding how many of the ideas and phenomena addressed here, despite being extant in other parts of Europe, were adopted or read differently in Iberia, or were transformed because of the Converso issue – both Jewish and Muslim. Or, to put it differently, we are faced with the problem of discovering whether the phenomena analyzed here can best be explained by looking inward, within Iberia, or by looking outward, to similar processes taking place in other parts of Europe. At issue is whether or not the Converso problem made Iberia a particularly fertile soil for certain ideas but not others. Nearly all of the contributions address this problem and deal with it in different ways, even looking further into the past to examine several processes' roots in Al-Andalus and medieval Christian Iberia. In fact, this constitutes the main problem addressed in this book: to what extent can the Converso question provide a key to explaining not only heterodoxy but a wide and seemingly diverse range of contemporaneous issues?

Mass religious conversion was also taking place in other parts of Europe during this time. In the period after both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, religious conversion occurred throughout Europe on a scale which can perhaps only be compared to the mass conversions to Christianity in the Roman Empire, or the mass conversions to Islam in the Middle East and the southern Mediterranean after the conquests of the eighth century. In early modern Europe a very large number of people were faced with new beliefs, new religious formations and the disintegration or reformulation of others, with the need to forge new personal identities. Like the Judeoconvertos and Moriscos, many resorted to Nicodemism, dissimulation, or to inner forms of religiosity. Protestant sects were forced to practice Nicodemism and inner faith in a way which was not unlike the secret practices of those Judeoconvertos or Moriscos who continued to practice Judaism or Islam, or who turned to an inner form of religiosity. Several contributions to this book indicate that the role of Conversos in movements of religious dissidence was conditioned less by the dissimulated survival of crypto-Jewish beliefs than by a forced religious Nicodemism, often in the form of an inward withdrawal. This strategy was

directly linked to the social stigma that arose whenever a person's 'tainted' origins were discovered.

Despite this apparently all-pervading ideology on tainted origins versus blood purity, Iberian society also produced movements of dissidence and resistance through different forms of fideism, mysticism and the defense of interior religiosity. All of these were linked to reform movements, which were, again, linked to the reforms taking place in the rest of Europe. Protestantism had a far-reaching influence in Spain than what is usually admitted. Iberia was also an extremely innovative breeding ground for a wider spiritual movement – whose adherents were identified as *Alumbrados*, *Iluminados*, *Dejados*, *Perfectos*. As Marcel Bataillon has shown,<sup>3</sup> *Alumbrado* tendencies were clearly analogous to those of the great religious revolution sweeping across the rest of Europe, usually identified by the labels of Protestantism or the Reformation. Spanish Illuminism began before the publication of Luther's theses, but the origins of Protestantism can also be traced back further than 1517. They are, at all events, movements which it is impossible to reduce to mere doctrines.

As in the rest of Europe, conversion affected many aspects of the religious life of Iberian society and certainly drove different kinds of desire for reform. The most frequently repeated symptom of this desire is what Bataillon and many after him have called 'Paulinism', that is, a faith in the ability of baptism to transform and renew men. This was part of the Erasmian thought that was so influential in Spain during the first half of the sixteenth century. Although we focus on events in Iberia, the chapters of this book suggest that the climate of reform and the processes of quest for spiritual interiority were carried out in ways not controlled by the institution of the Church. Dissatisfaction or lack of trust in ecclesiastical hierarchies, intellectual skepticism and internal exile are forms of behavior in which members of early modern Spanish society – as those living in other parts of Europe – engaged. This happened regardless of whether their origin was Converso or Old Christian. Disbelief, indifference, forgery, syncretism, accommodation and/or apology are all attitudes, as this book argues, which can be linked to this process.

To what extent were the Old Christians in whom we find these skeptical, pessimistic or fideistic tendencies influenced by a desire to distance themselves from policies such as the blood purity statutes, the practices of certain institutions such as the Inquisition, the ways in which the supposed evangelization of the Moriscos had taken place, or the debate that was set in motion to justify their expulsion? In a broader sense, which sectors do we see wishing to

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3 Marcel Bataillon, *Erasmus y España. Estudios sobre la historia espiritual del siglo XVI* (trans.) Antonio Alatorre (Madrid: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1991).

observe religion differently from the norms laid down at Trent, and what means of expression did they find to manifest their religiosity? These questions, taken up in some chapters and answered in different ways or from various angles, show the plurality of observable religious, political and intellectual positions in an Iberia that has been seen for far too long as homogeneous and monolithic. It also brings us to reject a view of 'Modernity' as a single moment of rupture. In fact, and although the word appears in its title, 'Modernity' is not, after all, a good analytical tool for the content of this book. 'Modern' is often equated with 'secular' and we do not want to convey the idea that dissent from religious orthodoxy was necessarily a prelude to a repudiation of religion altogether.<sup>4</sup> Such a premise would discount the doctrinal and intellectual complexity of many heterodox attitudes analyzed in this book.

Late medieval Iberian pluralism is shown to be a fertile terrain for doubt, dissimulation and unbelief in the afterlife and also one of skepticism about the possibility of arriving at a stable criterion for truth. Was the emergence of these forms of skepticism encouraged by a context of fluctuating religious identities, brought about by rounds of mass conversion? Or was it a consequence of 'inheritance', the tendency to believe what one's parents do, so that in passing from one religion to another all possible certainty is torn asunder? How should we distinguish the truly unique nature and consequences of the Converso phenomenon, and the associated attitudes of dissimulation, against the backdrop of a Europe that is increasingly accustomed to practices of spiritual dissimulation and subterfuge? The practical impossibility of spreading the gospel among Muslims was explained by reference to the idea that Muslims thought dissimulation legitimate, meaning that a genuine assessment of their real beliefs could never be made, their heart of hearts never pierced. Such claims occasionally led commentators to go so far as to express doubts about the transformational capacity of baptism, signaling the end of 'Paulinism'. Also, certain Protestant denominations – and in particular the Church of England – had denied the 'miraculous' capacity of the Sacrament of Baptism to transform men. The claim that belief was inherited ultimately resulted in an identification of cultural or religious characteristics with physical inheritance.

Failure therefore was not only due to inadequate evangelization, but also to the impossibility of identifying sincere belief. The Inquisition's failure or uncertain success in controlling other faiths meant that orthodoxy became identified with genealogy. The obsession with religious interiority was translated into an increasing regulation of ritual and culture.

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4 We follow Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson (eds.), *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy 1600–1750* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

Let us return to the blood purity statutes and the growing racialization of religion, in which the underlying belief in tainted blood, and the stigmatization of this 'stain', is generally considered most characteristically Iberian. Recent scholarship, in particular the work of Enrique Soria Mesa, has shown that the attempts of people of Jewish descent to erase all traces to their origins through the fabrication of 'Probanzas de cristiano viejo' or pedigrees of 'clean blood' (that would allow them to obtain important posts and offices) were both frequent and successful. This, even after having had family members previously tried by the Inquisition, an event that left a stain that was difficult to clean from the family's record.<sup>5</sup> Yet the very fact that they needed these complex and at times convoluted fabrications to climb in the social ladder, and the vulnerable situation imposed on them after having falsified those certificates, is a proof of the importance of the 'clean blood' statutes. The ideology of the pure blood followed the Medieval model where the blood of the Christian monarch set the standard for feudal organization. The fact that in Spain this ideology was so strongly linked with the rejection of those who had Jewish origins is arguably the most distinctive element vis-à-vis similar processes taking place in the rest of Europe. Arguably or perhaps in need of revision because although converts from one confession of Christianity to another were in principle not tainted by their biological lineage and were able to erase their convert origins, it was more difficult that we tend to assume. There was an increasing tendency to link religion and ethnicity. In France, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Protestants were denied access to certain professions, such as the law. The Germans, Dutch, and French who experienced religious diversity also had to wrestle with the dilemmas of an age when religion powerfully shaped the identity of individuals and communities. As Hans Blom and other Dutch historians have emphasized, toleration was less a principle of equality than a practice of exclusion.<sup>6</sup> And as recent research on mixed marriages – most notably the work of Benjamin Kaplan<sup>7</sup> – has shown, religious hybridity was often viewed in these lands as nothing short of monstrous, and there was a sense that there was something unnatural in mixing. Thus, a shadow of uncertainty hung over the orthodoxy and loyalty of people or groups who mixed with other religions. Moreover, Dennis Britton has also suggested a

5 Enrique Soria Mesa, *La realidad tras el espejo. Ascenso social y limpieza de sangre en la España de Felipe II* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 2016).

6 Hans W. Blom, 'Styles of Heterodoxy and Intellectual Achievement: Grotius and Arminianism', in *The Intellectual Consequences of Religious Heterodoxy* (ed.) Sarah Mortimer and John Robertson (Leiden: Brill, 2012) pp. 47–73.

7 Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) and especially *Cunegonde's Kidnapping: A Story of Religious Conflict in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Yale University Press, 2014).



racialization of religion in England. According to Britton the Church of England's theology on baptism turned Christians and 'infidels' into distinctive races.<sup>8</sup> However, blood was not identified with religion elsewhere in Europe in the way it was in Iberia. To be of Converso origin or to be accused of being of Converso origin – and hence of 'Judaizing' or 'Islamizing' – was perceived as real danger in all sectors of Iberian society. Accusations of such behavior – which included turning to the Inquisition – were often employed by elites, families or any group competing for power that wanted to get rid of its adversaries. The case of physicians, often identified as having Converso ancestry, and the politicization of medical expertise accompanied by professionalization, provides a clear example. It also shows that knowledge, like religion, was associated with biology.

Other countries in Europe also relied on genealogy to construct race. A growing body of scholarship has been recently defining the emergence of race as a category of identity in the early modern period. In sixteenth-century France, for example, the idea of a nobility of blood (*noblesse de sang*) and the word 'race' were used jointly and indistinctly as a way of distinguishing noblemen from others. The blood of individuals of a lower social class was thought to be capable of having a corrupting effect on noble blood in cases of mixed marriages. In other words, in France the 'race discourse' basically sought to separate and distinguish a privileged class. That same discourse of blood associated with nobility also existed in Spain. But what made the early modern Spanish notion of race distinct was its direct and powerful link with Judaism, Islam and heresy. Growing social anxieties over conversion and religious loyalties played a crucial role in turning lineage into a mechanism for promoting order and hierarchy. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the idea had been firmly established that having purely Christian ancestors was the only guarantee of a person's loyalty to the faith. Descent and religion, blood and faith, were the two foundations of this ideology. Publication of the blood purity statutes reinforced and strengthened this link, which had come to seem hegemonic by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Once the categories of truth had been destabilized, origin seems to have emerged as the last and only resort. And in this apparently paradoxical manner, the idea that religious belief was biologically inherited not only reinforced the tie between the concept of race and religious belonging, but also converged with a clear and growing skepticism in Iberia from the second half of the sixteenth century onwards. While this skepticism was not at all specific to Spain, and was expressed in terms which were not so different from those used in the rest of Europe, the underlying Converso problem lent it a number of specific characteristics.

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8 Dennis A. Britton, *Becoming Christian: Race, Reformation and Early Modern English Romance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014).

The idea that belief was inherited was connected to the impossibility of knowing the unknowable and deciding where truth laid. Numerous studies have been carried out on skepticism and doubt in Europe during this same period, and many recent works have shown that the paths towards ‘modernization’ intersected in one way or another with those of doubt, not only in the great Western philosophical tradition but also in the areas of Biblical philology, ethnography or antiquarianism. Much emphasis has been placed on the Biblical-philological tradition which opened the way for comparativism in France, the Netherlands and England, or for Italian and northern European humanism, and for the specificity of the Marranismo of the Conversos and ‘New Jews’ of Amsterdam.<sup>9</sup> Iberia has been in general overlooked by this historiography, just as it has by and large been omitted from studies concerning skepticism. This book provides material to reconsider such biases, particularly in the chapters by Stefania Pastore, Seth Kimmel, Felipe Pereda and Mercedes García-Arenal, which also show how close the proposals made in Spain were to those of contemporary Europe. This is not only true of epistemological skepticism, but also of Popkin’s main intuition concerning the interplay between religious faith and scientific criticism in the early modern struggle for certainty.

The assimilation of large numbers of converts from Judaism and Islam in late medieval and early modern Iberia forced both converts and Old Christians to confront Islamic and Jewish sacred texts, prophets, lineages, languages, and practices. Converts brought with them their own hermeneutical traditions, their readings and translations of the sacred texts, and their intellectual tools and books of reference, as is made clear in some of the chapters contained here. ‘Tainted’ origins versus sacred origins is also a topic at the heart of more than one chapter of this book, and particularly the efforts that were made to write a version of sacred origins which would make it possible to integrate Jews and Muslims into the Hispanic past. The existence of groups of former Muslims and Jews also weighed heavily when it came to considering the sacred languages of both religions, Arabic and Hebrew: the need arose to de-Islamize Arabic and to reclaim Hebrew as a sacred Christian language, as shown by the chapters by Adam Beaver or Valeria López Fadul. At a time when the first Orientalist studies were emerging in Europe, through figures like Erpenius, Bedwell or Raimondi, at a time when an Arabic printing press had started to

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9 The classical reference is Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism from Erasmus to Spinoza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979) although his thesis has been contested; see for example Dominik Perler, ‘Was there a ‘Pyrrhonian Crisis’ in Early Modern Philosophy? A Critical Note of Richard H. Popkin’, *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, 86 (2004): pp. 209–220; the studies that attack Popkin have not included Iberia. For comparativism, Guy Stroumsa, *A New Science: The Discovery of Religion in the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

function in Italy and when Eastern Christians had made a place for themselves in Rome and instituted the teaching of 'Christian Arabic', the existence in Spain – above all in Granada and Valencia – of Arabic-speaking populations in the early seventeenth century did not make it easy to separate Arabic from Islam, and especially from the alleged crypto-Islam of the Moriscos. Something similar occurred with Bible translations and readings. The dictates of Trent advised against translations of the Bible into the vernacular tongues – which in Spain were prohibited by the Inquisition – and declared that the Vulgate was the version to be used by Catholics. In Spain, as Adam Beaver discusses, this was accompanied by profound suspicion toward those who devoted their time to studying Hebrew, who were often seen as potential Judaizers. Some Spanish scholars of Hebrew and the Bible, to whom direct access to Jewish scriptural culture was denied, sought a path to it through the mediation or reading of works by Conversos, as was the case of Benito Arias Montano, whose presence is of primordial significance in several chapters of this book, by Fernando Rodríguez Mediano, Adam Beaver, and Valeria López Fadul. These contributions also highlight the uniqueness of the Spanish medieval Bible tradition, which was closer to the Hebrew tradition and the Hebrew text than to the Vulgate. This was a tradition that was clearly derived from Hispanic Judaism's grammatical and philological analysis of Scripture. What Beaver calls the 'Sephardic habitus' is not meant to imply that a Converso background was a prerequisite to becoming a scholar: rather, it signifies a far-reaching legacy of the intellectual history of the Iberian peninsula. The textual transmission of the Hebrew text of the Bible and its rabbinical exegesis had been intertwined in the history of the three Iberian faith communities long before the forced conversions, and it did not simply vanish thereafter. We can also see that the prohibition of the Bible in Romance vernacular was challenged and debated, yet ultimately did not prevent the text of the Bible from being disseminated in a variety of ways. Therefore, different contributions to this book, Beaver's and Rodríguez Mediano's in particular, show that the generally accepted equation of Protestantism with Hebraism and the Hebrew Bible, and Catholicism with Latin and the Vulgate, is not so clear-cut. This is a panorama that likewise poses the problem of the idiosyncratic relation between the Spanish language and the linguistic model of the Bible.

The issue of translating the Bible forms the core of different sets of questions that can be understood through the more general problem of the relationship between the sacred past of Spain, the Biblical text, and Jewish antiquities. Besides its dogmatic implications, the problem of literality was part of a wider discussion on linguistic and literary models for Spanish as a language: if the Bible and Hebrew were able to provide such a model, it was through the existence of Medieval Spanish translations made by Jews. The use of these translations, and the idea of Hebrew as a model for Spanish, can be

found, for example, in the work of Francisco de Quevedo. In a more general way, the tension between literal and allegorical exegesis, and the different meanings of the Biblical text, was central in discussions of the concept of representation. The tale of Nebuchadnezzar's Jewish legions, as analyzed by Adam Beaver, shows how Iberian Jews and Christians saw themselves at times as allies in rescuing the Bible not once but twice: first from Islam and then from the Reformation. Beaver analyzes the consequences of interlocking phases of conversions and the role of different periods and settings of polemics in preserving hidden continuities in pre- and post-1492 Iberia.

The intricacies of the Hebrew language and of Jewish culture and ritual would have been almost inaccessible to Christian scholars without the help of teachers who had been raised in Judaism, that is, without the help of recent converts. This made Conversos valuable partners for Christian humanists, especially to those who wanted to use Hebrew and the Jewish heritage for purposes other than mere polemics – those who, at the same time, wanted to separate Hebrew learning from its Jewish context and make it the property of Christians. In the same way, knowledge of the Qur'an was largely achieved via the mediation of Conversos like Juan Andrés, whose name shows up in several contributions to this book – see the chapters by Pier Mattia Tommasino, Gerard A. Wieggers, Ryan Szpiech, and Teresa Soto and Katarzyna Starczewska – or Juan Gabriel de Teruel. This mediation often, but not always, took place in a context of anti-Islamic religious polemic. Just as translations of the Hebrew text were carried out by Jews and for Jews, translations of the Qur'an – generally written in *aljamía*: Spanish written in the Arabic alphabet – were made by Muslim Moriscos for Muslims. What is the relationship between the two kinds of translations if the Qur'an translated for polemical purposes was made by converted *alfaques* (Muslim scholars) who were familiar with the peninsular *tafsir* (Islamic exegesis) tradition? In the case of Juan Andrés, for example, this proves beyond all doubt the continuity of hermeneutical methods rooted in Al-Andalus. As for the Qur'anic quotations included in seventeenth-century polemical treatises, they show that Arabic was part of an argument of authority, a legitimizing device and a way to put pressure on Islamic populations that no longer spoke Arabic. In the case of Martín de Figuerola – see Soto and Starczewska – Arabic was also a legitimizing device to convince authorities to compel the Muslims to convert: language could adorn someone's performance, to serve professional ends in addition to hermeneutical ones. Use of the Arabic language and Islamic sources as tools to legitimate this anti-Islamic enterprise created a proximity that proved far from comfortable and also created an unexpected dependency on the opponent, as discussed by Soto and Starczewska. Once again, the role of the Converso *alfaques* proves to be fundamental; their contribution to the task of evangelizing – as polemicists, but also

Orientalists – sheds new light on what has too blithely been diagnosed as a deteriorated form of Islam that was cut off from its sources. Therefore, the chapters of this book also force us to revise clichés taken for granted in this area, such as the idea that in Iberia the Bible was not translated or therefore understood, or that in this period Spain, unlike other European lands, did not witness the rise of Orientalist knowledge based on a new set of philological and methodological tools. Orientalist scholarship certainly was produced in Spain, where the methods of philologists and antiquarians contributed to the study of Oriental languages, especially Arabic and Hebrew. Such scholars were indeed in contact with the European ‘Republic of Letters’. A number of Moriscos played a part in forming this Orientalist scholarship, as in the case of al-Ḥajarī analyzed by G. Wieggers, who was influential even in Northern European university circles, or the convert and clergyman Juan Andrés. Translations of the Bible and the Qur’ān and their inclusion in works of religious polemics reveal the ambiguities of the language of the Scriptures. Even more importantly, the choice of texts to include in polemics and the way they were translated shows how such decisions affected not only the possible acquisition of a new faith by the Conversos, but also the belief system of the preachers themselves. These converts were of great importance both for polemics and for erudite humanist knowledge of Judaism and Islam. Indeed, such figures afforded Christian Hebraists and Arabists extraordinary access to the last living heirs of a tradition of grammatical and exegetical study that was unique to medieval Iberia and unavailable elsewhere in Europe.

Two chapters (Wieggers, Tommasino) show that this Spanish Orientalist knowledge and the polemical exchanges between Muslims and Christians in Iberia had a noteworthy impact on discussions about the origins and place of Christianity and on nascent Arabic and Islamic studies in Europe. Removed from the Iberian context, some anti-Christian polemical texts written by Moriscos were translated into Latin and used in Protestant circles as anti-Trinitarian polemical tools. Thomas Erpenius and Jacobus Golius, two founding fathers of Oriental studies in the Netherlands, made use of Morisco authors as reliable sources for knowledge of both Arabic and Islam. The anti-Islamic treatise penned by the convert Juan Andrés, the only such text to present itself as the natural product of an authentic conversion experience, as Ryan Szpiech proposes, was also the repository of traditional Islamic doctrinal knowledge, the heritage of Al-Andalus. Different contributions (Tommasino, Soto and Starczewska, and Wieggers) not only show how Juan Andrés’ long trail of influence extended to writers beyond Iberia, but also focus on the trail of Morisco exile writing from Morocco, such as the work of Muḥammad Alguazir (Wieggers).

Another problem which Spain had in common with many European nations of the time, and which is shown by this book to have been transformed by the Converso substrate, is that of historiography and the quest for origins. In many parts of Europe we see from the mid-sixteenth century onwards a historiography which can be described as 'proto-national'. All of these historiographical works included a counter-reaction which can be described as 'anti-Roman' – including in Italy, with a focus on the Etruscans – in direct opposition to the Italianizing humanism which had cast Italy as the preeminent nation in Europe, on account of its Roman past. In Spain – and in other countries, especially Germany – a pride in all things 'Gothic' arose in opposition to this Italian vision of Europe. At the same time, the Jewish and Christian tradition was placed in opposition to the achievements of Classical Antiquity, robbing the latter of its pretensions to cultural superiority. This new ideology produced a notable outpouring of idealization and forgery, in a context where false chronicles took on increasing importance. The most influential example of this new trend was the work of the Italian scholar and forger Annio da Viterbo, who claimed to use as his sources the unpublished works of ancient authors and whose own work constituted an integration of the Old Testament and cultures from before the Greco-Roman period. Countries, towns, cities and dynasties could thereby find or create a mythical background for their predecessors which was independent of the myths of classical culture. 'Ancient' and 'sacred' became two overlapping concepts. In Spain too, the remains of saints or churches, the bones of martyrs, and the ruins of buildings which appeared in a host of villages and cities were 'discovered' as a way of linking Spain with sacred history. The creation of local sacred histories with their own martyrs made it possible to include Spain in a sanctified history, one that stretched back to the Orient of the Bible and even to Babylon and Egypt, wellsprings of a wisdom and prestige that surpassed those of Greece and Rome, as V. López Fadul and C. Vincent-Cassy argue in their contributions. It meant, at the same time, the creation of a new local religion. In the course of this antiquarian quest, which unearthed both forgeries and real archaeological remains, modern Spanish historiography was often seduced by the forgeries of Annio da Viterbo, which dramatically linked the history of Spain with the mythology of the Great Flood and the genealogy of Noah.

All of this, once again, took on its own specific character in Iberia, and the presence of archaeological and monumental remains from the Arab past, especially in towns and cities of Andalusia such as Cordoba, Seville and Granada, only complicated matters. When the history of such cities came to be written – their archaeological remains described, their inscriptions deciphered – what exactly were historians to do? How could they accommodate an Arab-Islamic past that in these cities was so obvious, so unavoidable, and at the same time so

glorious? One of the ways to skirt this evidence of Islam was to use the remains of martyrs (objects, relics, images) that were so much sought after by antiquarians working on local history. The discovery of such vestiges served to prove the continuity of the Christian past throughout a long period of martyrdom caused first by the Romans and later by the Muslims, presented as belonging to one common class of enemies and cruel persecutors. Cécile Vincent-Cassy's argument is related to that of Adam Beaver, which shows the potential alliance of Jews and Christians against Islam in a polemical vindication closely related to the creation of new elites. The idea was that the blood of Christian martyrs had irrigated this soil which by rights was theirs, sanctifying it for all eternity and thus creating a sacred geography. Another way to solve the problem was to de-Islamize such remains. They were presented – as in the case of the Great Mosque of Cordoba – as the work of the Phoenicians, Idumeans or other Biblical people who had arrived with Tubal, Noah's grandson.

The theme of Islam and the Arabic language in Spain is ever-present in these early modern historical narratives centered on the problem of integrating the history of Al-Andalus into the history of Spain. The debate is inextricably connected to wider contemporary discussions on the origins of the Spanish language and the influence of Arabic on it, as seen in the peninsula's toponymy – as López Fadul discusses. National history was also the history of a territory marked clearly by its archaeological and monumental remains and by its place names. However, it was not only territory and national history that had been 'infiltrated' by the Islamic past. Arabic's influence on the Spanish language was well known. What was to be done with such marks of Jewish and Islamic culture? And how were the populations of Converso origin in turn to find their place in the new national narrative? Some notable sixteenth-century Iberian forgeries stemmed from such questions, especially that of the Lead Books of the Sacromonte of Granada and the chronicles of the Jesuit Jerónimo Román de la Higuera.<sup>10</sup> Just as the latter claimed that there were documents demonstrating the presence of an ancient Jewish population in Spain, one that had opposed the killing of Christ and was therefore unencumbered by the heavy burden of this sin, the Lead Books appeared to defend the existence of a Spanish Arab culture, represented by Moriscos who had converted to Christianity at an early date and who had not taken part in the 1568–70 Alpujarras War. These texts 'created' Arabs who were free of Islam and Jews who were freed from responsibility for the death of Christ – two peoples who had lived in the Peninsula from the beginning and who connected it to an earlier age when humankind had been closer to its Creator.

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<sup>10</sup> See the recent book by Katrina B. Olds, *Forging the Past: Invented Histories in Counter-Reformation Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

It was a history which necessarily traced itself back to sacred Christian origins, in line with the official narrative of an emerging proto-national historiography. At the same time, it made it possible to include within the national narrative those groups who were in fact destined to be left on its margins – Christians of Islamic or Jewish origin. The idea that Spanish Jews had arrived with the Assyrians after the conquest of Nebuchadnezzar was widely believed, as is shown by Beaver. He connects it not so much to the need for these Conversos to participate in the writing of a proto-national history as to a further development of an Islamic polemic against Judaism that ended up uniting Christians and Jews in defense of the Bible, not only as a sacred text but as a historical source. In the case of Spain, the study and use of the ancient history of the Hebrew people was linked to Spaniards' unique relationship with the Bible, Hebrew, and the conditions surrounding the production of the nation's sacred history. Moreover, this use was to be of acute importance for the construction of an imperial ideology.

One tremendously important element running through several of the contributions to this book is the relationship between Spanish historiography and sacred history, and therefore the issue of the national history's relationship with the Bible. This was a problem that was articulated in a number of ways, all of them connected to the spiritual and symbolic dimension of the relations between the history of Spain and the Biblical past. The small and hypothetical allusion to Sepharad/Spain in the book of Obadiah, so dearly cherished by Arias Montano but the subject of much controversy, situated Spain within the sacred text but also provided it with a place in the economy of salvation – see Beaver, Rodríguez Mediano, López Fadul.

Toponymy and etymology became necessary tools and were amply used in works that aimed to discover the origins of peoples and the histories of their regions, striking at the core of some of the most controversial aspects of Spanish history and self-understanding. It was not only a matter of national history and territory: different scholars identify a significant form of linguistic nationalism too in early modern Spain. Many figures expressed in very clear terms the idea that there should be a single national language and that this language was an important unifying characteristic for national identity, endowed with historical legitimacy.

Iberia's place within a European context is made so clear in this book that it becomes impossible to think of Spain without Europe or Europe without Spain. This seems obvious but in fact is not obvious at all. Italy and the Netherlands were clearly lands of interaction and constant mutual reference – as emphasized by Tommasino, Wieggers, Kimmel, Pereda, Pastore, and García-Arenal. A different but no less important means of connection with Europe which appears in this book, especially in Pastore and Pereda, lies not so much in the transmission of ideas as in the mirror image of Spain offered by other



countries. Our current way of thinking is so thoroughly shaped by a European liberal historiography that condemns the Spain of the Inquisition and the statutes of blood purity that we have failed to notice that in fact early modern European nations chose to characterize Spain as Oriental – because of its Jewish and Islamic populations – as part of an effort to challenge its imperial dominion over other European countries. This interpretation remained the norm in Italy, France and the Netherlands, and it caused much consternation among early modern Spaniards themselves, who acutely resented the representation of their country as one mired in Judaism and Islam. Italians, for instance, spoke of the *peccadiglio di Spagna* to refer with irony and disdain to the mixed origin of Spaniards and their ambiguous religious identity (Pastore). Erasmus of Rotterdam, in a famous letter to Thomas More in 1517, explained why he had turned down an invitation from Cardinal Cisneros to travel to Spain to work on the Polyglot Bible, writing that he did not like such a deeply Semitic country (Pereda). This representation of the country affected Spain's position in Europe and its aspirations within the Catholic world. European disdain for the mixed origins of Spaniards created a game of mirrors – ‘The mirror of Spain’, to borrow the title of J.N. Hillgarth's book<sup>11</sup> – in which Spain displayed a defensive attitude towards all belief deemed deviant within the heart of Hispanic Catholicism.

The supposedly ambiguous religious identity of Spaniards revolved around notions of hypocrisy and simulation. Stefania Pastore shows that sixteenth-century Italians liked to define Spaniards, against all our notions of the period, as hypocrites, marranos and unbelievers, and her proposal is confirmed from a different angle by the contribution of Felipe Pereda. The Spaniard is presented as the marrano, the practiced hypocrite who, having been obliged to learn the art of simulation, has turned this existential attitude into his political weapon of choice. In the perception of Italians and contemporary humanists, the Spanish Inquisition was by no means an institution that demonstrated the impeccable purity of Spanish faith. On the contrary, the mixing of Spanish and alien blood over many centuries was thought to have bred doubt, disbelief and dissimulation. Hence the famously reputed hypocrisy of the Spaniards.

But the accusation of hypocrisy was one that was also in constant use within Iberia itself, as part of a perpetual climate of suspicion. Hypocrisy is one of the transversal notions throughout this book. Hypocrisy created, as doubt did, a space without a defined religious identity. We are confronted with the blurring of identity because of hypocrisy, while at the same time hypocrisy gives rise to another identity altogether, equated with heresy and unbelief. This makes hypocrisy dangerous indeed. Several contributions explore the complex

11 Jocelyn N. Hillgarth, *The Mirror of Spain, 1500–1700: The Formation of a Myth* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000).

notions that revolve around the breach between external manifestations and inner states, intentions and beliefs (Pastore, Pereda, García-Arenal, Fowler, and Kimmel). Notions like hypocrisy, but also duplicity, dissimulation and simulation, are to be found on many pages in this book. Pereda's chapter shows, for example, the ambivalent dissimulation inherent in linguistic and pictorial representation. The third part of the book in particular reveals the tensions between internal and external manifestations of religious beliefs, and shows how these notions extend to the entire realm of representation. These chapters are also concerned with the interaction between an awareness of the difficulties involved in interpreting divinity and those at play when interpreting other human beings.

What appears in these chapters (especially those by Pereda, Pastore, and Kimmel) is the ambivalent meaning of hypocrisy, which is negative but can also be positive, as well as its hermeneutical value. The ambivalence of hypocrisy and dissimulation has not been as thoroughly analyzed by historiography as other related notions such as secret and concealment. Jacques Chiffolleau has produced seminal work on the question of how medieval law treated the 'secret' and the 'hidden', showing these two notions to be a key issue for the institutional construction of the political subject: *Ecclesia de occultis non iudicat*, the Church does not judge things which are concealed.<sup>12</sup> This saying seems to delimit the space of judges while opening up the possibility that in every individual the institutional Church itself recognizes a zone of total exemption, which is the domain of God only, where only God can look and judge. The problem is that these two notions of the secret and the hidden are ambivalent: on the one hand they have a very clear negative character – the hidden or occult is related to Satan, the secret to plots and conspiracies – but on the other they refer to something which is not negative at all: God's knowledge of the humanly unknowable, divine omnipotence regarding the inner core of man. The occult also designates what man cannot know because of his imperfection and finitude. We might want to ask, as David Nirenberg suggested as a discussant on one of the conference panels, what Augustine meant when he wrote, in his *De Trinitate*, that Sacred Scripture used words 'in order to signify that which is not so, but which must be said to be so'. It 'must be said to be so' both because human language cannot represent divine realities, and because human minds cannot understand those realities. For Augustine and the hermeneutical traditions that followed him, scriptural metaphor, indeed all language, both scriptural and non-scriptural, possesses a power at once to enlighten and to deceive.

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12 Jacques Chiffolleau, *La chiesa, il segreto e l'obbedienza. La costruzione del soggetto politico nel Medioevo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010).

**PART 1**

*Biblical Culture, Jewish Antiquities and New Forms  
of Sacred History*

